

**Sustain Mid Maine Coalition
Climate Change Public Policy Team
Meeting Minutes
October 23, 2013**

Meeting started at about 6:35 p.m. at the Winslow Public Library. Jane Edwards opened the meeting and asked each person present to give their names and where they are from.

Members present: Jane Edwards, Elery Keene, Peter Garrett, Tom Tietenberg, Dick Thomas, Ernie Grolimund. Others present: Mike Heavener, Chairman of SSMC Board of Directors; Linda Woods, SMMC staff, Lori Fowle, Roger Katz, Tom Longstaff, Cathy Nadeau – legislators. All were seated in a circle, facing each other.

Mike Heavener welcomed the legislators to our meeting and briefly explained how Sustain Mi Maine Coalition began in January 2009 and told some of the its activities.

Elery Keene referred to the vision statement, slightly revised when adopted at the January 26, 2009 annual meeting. A copy had been placed on each chair. A copy is attached to these minutes. Also on each chair was a pamphlet with information about some of the activities of SMMC, and naming the four teams that have been active for several years: Energy; Transportation; Recycle, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle; Education, and Local Foods.

Elery said that the Climate Change Public Policy Team, our newest team, was organized in the spring of 2013 based on discussion that took place during our 2013 annual meeting. There seemed to be a desire to develop a stronger relationship with state legislators relating to climate change concerns and to identify legislation relating to climate change related legislation, and in some cases testify on legislation. Jane Edwards and Elery Keene were active in doing this even before this committee was formed and were named to be co-chairs of the committee. Other members and teams had previously done some of this, but it was felt that being more systematic about doing this would be better. Our first meeting was in March, 2013.

Peter Garrett told a story about a house that he and his wife had bought in Winslow a number of years ago. It was in terrible physical condition but they repaired it, made it very energy efficient, and rented it out to people who wanted to live there.

Linda Woods described her part time job doing administrative duties for SMMC, such as sending out meeting notices and other information, taking minutes of meetings of several of the committees, etc. while not being paid for not more than fifteen hours per week. She also volunteers a lot of time to SMMC activities. Linda told about some of the important activities of team on, the energy team including the weatherization grant obtained from the Efficiency Maine program which employed a person for two years to encourage homeowners to better weatherize their homes, having an energy audit done and doing at least some of the things that would make their homes more energy efficient. Linda told about how the 4R team had promoted recycling and had worked with the Mid Maine Chamber of Commerce to collect material from the “Taste of Waterville summer

events and have them composted at a local farm. She said that the Education Team had been active at many events promoting many different kinds of things that people can do to reduce the adverse effects of global warming. She said the Local Foods team had set up community gardens for families to use in various places: Near North street and in the south end in Waterville, near Dallaire street in Winslow, and also a place in Oakland.

Tom Tietenberg said that he had been actively involved in the Energy team – promoting home energy efficiency. He has been concerned about climate change for some time. He was an economics professor at Colby College for many years. He contributed to development of the cap and trade program that Maine established a few years ago in cooperation with many other states in the northeast. This program provides incentives for electrical generating facilities to reduce carbon emissions and has been very successful. He contributed formation of Efficiency Maine, which uses some of the money generated by the cap and trade program to promote energy efficiency and reduce emissions of carbon dioxide. Tom said that we have done some good things, but not enough. We need to act sooner instead of later to stop putting carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, otherwise it will be too late.

Dick Thomas talked pointed out heat pumps are a very effective way for people to heat their homes, taking heat out of the air instead of burning fossil fuels, greatly reducing the amount of carbon dioxide emitted into the atmosphere. He also pointed out that it costs less on a dally basis to use heat pumps that to use natural gas of fuel oil to heat homes and many other kinds of buildings.

Elery Keene added this saying that he had just learned that a heat pump for his home could be installed for \$4800. This is less that it would cost to install a natural gas furnace. He said that Mike Heavener and Ken Fletcher had installed heat pumps to heat their homes.

Tom Tietenberg said that he has installed heat pumps to heat his home also.

Lori Fowle said that she is serving her first term in the Maine Legislature, a representative serving Vassalboro and part of Augusta. She is on the Veterans and Legal affairs committee. She has been a member of the Vassalboro School Board and sometimes on the budget committee. She feels good about representing her town in the legislature, and appreciates input fro constituents.

Roger Katz said that he is the Assistant Senate Minority leader, serving his second term as a state Senator representing Augusta and some other towns as well (including Vassalboro). He said that the legislature is not very active on issues of climate change. Most legislators are focused on short term, not long term, and are not well educated about climate change.

Tom Tietenberg thanked Roger Katz for supporting Efficiency Maine.

Roger Katz said that the state is providing funds for energy efficiency and it is the right thing to do.

Jane Edwards said that the Energy, Utilities, and Technology Committee “held over” about ten pieces of legislation that relates to climate change instead of making a recommendation so that they could further study this and better understand the benefits of this kind of legislation. They have recently had two all day meetings and also been on a field trip. This shows some interest.

Tom Longstaff said that he has for a long time been a friend and companion of Tom Longstaff. They were both at the same time on the faculty of Colby College. He has been involved with the SMMC since its beginning in January, 2009. He is a member of the Veterans and Legal affairs committee. Some people think we don’t need to act to reduce use of fossil fuel. We can’t let them influence us.

Cathy Nadeau talked about her involvement on the County and Local Government committee and other things as well. She enthusiastically sponsored the legislation to enable creation of a Natural Gas District to serve Waterville, Winslow and some nearby towns this spring. She likes being in the legislature.

Peter Garrett asked Cathy how she deals with lobbyists.

Cathy Nadeau said that she listens politely to lobbyists, but she also looks for other ideas on the issues. She tries to make her voting decisions based on a well informed understanding of the issues.

Tom Longstaff said that legislators don’t underestimate the testimony of ordinary citizens. It is very important.

Roger Katz said that lobbyist is not a dirty word. Legislators pay a lot of attention to how a committee votes. If it is a unanimous, or nearly unanimous vote by the committee, most legislators will vote that way in both the House and the Senate. If the vote from the committee is very close, perhaps only a one-vote margin, it is very much harder to predict what the vote will be in each of the two houses of the legislature.

Cathy Nadeau said that she was involved in formation of SMMC and was present at the catalyst event. She is a member of the Winslow town Council.

Ernie Grolimund said that he also recently installed a heat pump to heat his home, a small cape. He is very satisfied with this. Ernie lives in Waterville.

Elery Keene filled in about some of the activities of the transportation team. The chair of the team is Jim Wood, the person of the public bus system operated by the regional Community Action agency that serves the Waterville area, Augusta area, and also Somerset county. That agency has expanded the number of busses and routes greatly and rider-ship has increased greatly. Bus routes have been established to get people between

Waterville and Augusta. Buses will take people to and from the new hospital in northern Augusta. This team has also looked at transportation of freight by rail because trucks use 3 to 4 times as much diesel fuel to move a ton of freight a mile by truck. So it is much more energy efficient to move freight by rail. Waterville could be a hub for inter-modal freight, brought in trailer truck bodies on flat cars. The trailer bodies could be unloaded and taken to business customers in the surrounding area by trucks just about as quickly as if carried all the way by trucks. Products created by manufacturers and farmers in the area could be loaded onto flat cars for delivery to hubs long distances away in the same way. A representative of Pan Am Railways in Waterville said that the rail company is ready to do this. They now have better connections with other railroads to carry freight long distances this way. Additional flatcars have been ordered. The waiting list for delivery is long because so many railroads want to do this. The inter-modal freight system in Auburn has been doing very well.

Ernie Grolimund said that he has been using his technical experience to evaluate safety problems that relate to burning wood to heat homes. Wood smoke is very toxic, and can harm the health of people who breathe it.

At this point Roger Katz left.

Peter Garret made a motion to approve the minutes of the last meeting. The motion was seconded by Jane, and all members voted to approve. There was little time left before the library would be closing at 8:00 p.m.

Someone asked what would be the best way to communicate with legislators.

Lori said she thought email is the best way to communicate with individual legislators. She said that it is important to work with members of the committee that is considering the legislation that you care about. It is good to testify at public hearings.

Cathy Nadeau said that telephone works better for her, because she can ask questions and make sure that she understands, but email is ok.

Tom Longstaff said that both email and telephone are okay with him. If he has an email he can sometimes forward it to another legislator that he knows. Tom doesn't like getting duplicate position statements from many different people. He prefers to have statements that were written by the person who sends it.

Jane Edwards asked if it is bad to show up to the legislature too often.

All three legislators said that it is a good thing to appear frequently.

The next meeting will be Monday, November 25 at the Winslow Library.

Respectfully submitted – Elery Keene